

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:DEREUTHER:JFC
APPROVED BY NEA - MR. VELIOTES
M/CT - AMB. ISHAM

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USINT BAGHDAD PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 010957

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, IZ, US

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE TO GOI ABOUT ITS SUPPORT OF PALESTINIAN
TERRORIST GROUPS

REF: A) STATE 545 B) BAGHDAD 23, C) STATE 8573

1. VELIOTES AND AMBASSADOR ISHAM MET WITH THE HEAD OF THE IRAQI INTERESTS SECTION JANUARY 12 TO ASK THE GOI TO RE-CONSIDER ITS SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN GROUPS THAT INDULGE IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. THEY INFORMED KHATIB OF SENATE HEARINGS ON INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 24. ISHAM SAID THESE HEARINGS WERE A FOLLOW-UP TO THE SENATE SEPTEMBER 14, 1977 HEARINGS. THE COMING HEARINGS WERE A SERIOUS MATTER BECAUSE THE SENATE WAS CONSIDERING LEGISLATION, NOT JUST SEEKING INFORMATION. THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION FOCUSES ATTENTION ON COUNTRIES THAT AID AND ABET INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND THOSE THAT HAVE INSUFFICIENT ANTI-HIJACKING SAFEGUARDS AT THEIR AIRPORTS.

2. VELIOTES NOTED WITH SATISFACTION IRAQ'S STATED POSITION
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AGAINST SKYJACKING, BUT CRITICIZED GOI SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN GROUPS WHICH ENGAGE IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. IT IS NOW WIDELY BELIEVED THAT IRAQ SUPPORTS TWO SUCH GROUPS:

ABU NIDAL'S BLACK JUNE ORGANIZATION AND THE WADI HADDAD FACTION OF THE PFLP. WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT'S GENERAL POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIAN

CAUSE. THE DISTINCTION WE WANT TO DRAW IS BETWEEN THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE AND SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN GROUPS WHICH ENGAGE IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. WHATEVER IRAQ'S ASSOCIATION WITH ABU NIDAL AND THE WADI HADDAD FACTION, SHE WOULD BEAR THE BRUNT OF INTERNATIONAL OUTRAGE OVER FUTURE TERRORIST ACTIONS CONDUCTED BY EITHER OF THESE TWO GROUPS. IRAQ SHOULD THEREFORE RECONSIDER SUCH POLICIES WHICH HAVE DAMAGED HER REPUTATION.

3. AMBASSADOR ISHAM MENTIONED THAT SENATORS HE RECENTLY BRIEFED WERE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND WANTED STRONG U.S. ACTION OPPOSING IT, REGARDLESS OF THE POLITICAL COSTS. THE ADMINISTRATION SHARES THESE CONCERNS. INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED AND IS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE.

4. KHATIB SAID THAT IT WAS NO SECRET THAT GOI GAVE TRAINING TO ANY PALESTINIAN FEDAYEEN; BUT THIS TRAINING WAS NOT FOR INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST PURPOSES. HE THEREFORE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY IRAQ SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SENATE HEARINGS.

5. VELIOTES ANSWERED THAT THE WORLD WOULD DRAW AN IN-ESCAPABLE CONNECTION BETWEEN TRAINING IN IRAQ AND IRAQI RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUBSEQUENT TERRORIST OPERATIONS. ISHAM CONTINUED THAT THE TRAINING IN IRAQ RESULTED IN ATTACKS

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ON TARGETS UNASSOCIATED WITH THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE. FOR EXAMPLE, WADI HADDAD'S CONNECTION WITH THE BAADER-MEINHOF GANG IN THE LUFTHANSA HIJACKING SERVED NO PALESTINIAN INTERESTS.

6. KHATIB DENIED IRAQI INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM, AGREEING THAT TERRORISM DIDN'T FIT IRAQI OBJECTIVES. HE ASKED WHAT WE WANTED OF THE INTERESTS SECTION. ISHAM SAID THAT KHATIB SHOULD ALERT BAGHDAD TO THE COMING HEARINGS AND MENTION THE PRESSURE THE ADMINISTRATION WILL BE UNDER TO IDENTIFY AND CONDEMN COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE SUPPORTED GROUPS ENGAGED IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. IRAQ SHOULD RE-EVALUATE POLICIES WHICH HAVE IMPLICATED BAGHDAD WITH INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM.

7. COMMENT: THE MEETING WAS WITHOUT POLEMICS. WE BELIEVE KHATIB UNDERSTOOD OUR PRESENTATION. YOU NEED NOT MAKE A DEMARCHE TO THE GOI FOR THE TIME BEING. IF ASKED ABOUT OUR REPRESENTATION, YOU MAY DRAW ON THE TALKING POINTS POUCHES YOU AND THE ABOVE SUMMARY. FYI: FULL MEMCON TO BE POUCHES. CHRISTOPHER

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